

POCKET PC EXPERT

FAQ

Q Is there any way to use my Pocket PC as a kind of remote control unit to control Microsoft PowerPoint presentations on my notebook over infrared or Bluetooth?

A Yes. You're going to need to buy a copy of Salling Clicker (\$24, around £13, from www.salling.com), which gives you full control over PowerPoint presentations via either Bluetooth or WiFi, though not infrared. As well as controlling the slideshow, it can also display your slide notes on the handheld screen, so you can discreetly glance at them while the presentation is running. It also shows a preview image of the next slide, together with a stopwatch.

As well as PowerPoint, it can be used to control Windows Media Player and iTunes, behaving just like a TV remote control. If you prefer to leave the notebook behind, you may be able to run PowerPoint presentations by connecting your handheld directly to a projector, depending upon which type of PDA you have.

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Information at your fingertips

Your Pocket PC is the perfect way to access reams of information wherever you are – and, best of all, you don't need access to the internet, as **Steve Clack** explains

Rather than reaching for a dictionary or encyclopedia from a bookshelf, most of us now reach for Google instead and usually find exactly what we want in a fraction of the time it takes to thumb through a paper index. The trouble is, when you're away from your PC you can end up feeling a bit lost without such a fabulous resource at your fingertips.

If you have internet access on your Pocket PC, you can use Google from there with Pocket Internet Explorer. But, unless you have a WiFi connection you could spend frustrating minutes waiting to establish a connection and load just a few webpages. Web browsing on a small screen can also be frustrating. Some pages that rely heavily on JavaScript and the like may refuse to work. The most convenient solution is usually to keep a decent repository of information locally on the handheld, rather than relying on a live internet connection.

WIKI QUICKIE

Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) has gained huge popularity over the past few years. The online version of this huge, free encyclopedia covers almost 1.5 million articles in its English language variant. Although the

quality of its content varies a little from article to article, it's generally excellent. Many entries contain far more depth than you'll find in other encyclopedias. Although you can't have offline access to such a huge volume of information, even on your PC, you can fit most of the articles and cut-down images into a format that you can load on your Pocket PC.

Unfortunately, it's not quite as straightforward as simply downloading something free from the Wikipedia website. It costs \$38 (around £20) for the TomeRaider software (www.tomerader.com) and you'll need just over 1,100MB of storage card space for the Wikipedia data file. The software does provide access to a few other handy reference works, all of which are available for free, and it can also be used to read free e-books. You need to install the TomeRaider reader software first before downloading whatever data files you want and loading them on your memory storage card.

On the TomeRaider website, you'll find download links for Wikipedia (including a cut-down 290MB version), an excellent offline version of the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), plus a selection of out-of-copyright encyclopedias, classic books and other

Getting in synch Mac synchronisation

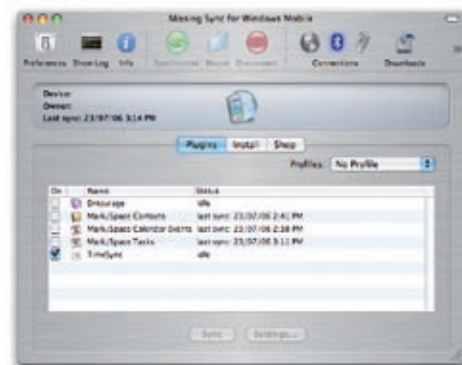
Q I'm thinking of switching from Microsoft Windows to Apple Macintosh, but am worried that I won't be able to synchronise anything with my Pocket PC. What do I need to do?

A To match the capabilities of ActiveSync on your PC, you'll need to be able to synchronise all your Calendar, Contacts and Tasks items, as well as exchanging Pocket Word (Word Mobile) and Excel files, installing music and video, and so on. It's equally important that you're able to install new software. For most of these tasks, The Missing Sync for Windows Mobile (\$40, around £21, from www.markspace.com) is your best bet, and in our experience is far more reliable than PocketMac (\$42, around £22, from www.pocketmac.net). This doesn't support Windows Mobile 5.

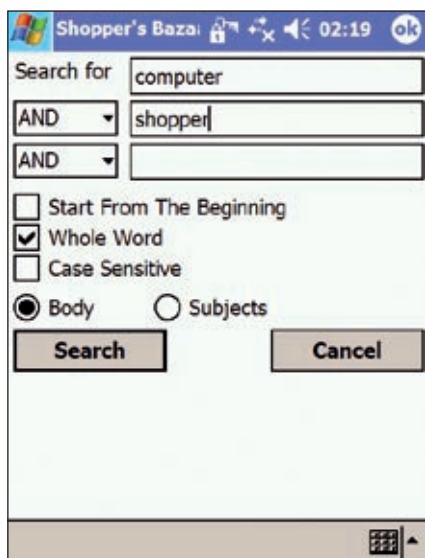
The biggest limitation with Missing Sync is that it can't handle your handheld's Word and Excel files directly, so you'll need to save them into desktop Word/Excel format and copy them back and forth manually. Like any non-Windows solution, it's also unable to perform software installations that need to be run from an .exe file. Although a few Pocket PC programs are now available as .cab files instead, which it can handle, it's far from a satisfactory solution.

As all new Macs now run Intel processors, you can get around this by either installing Apple's free Boot Camp software or the excellent Parallels PC emulator

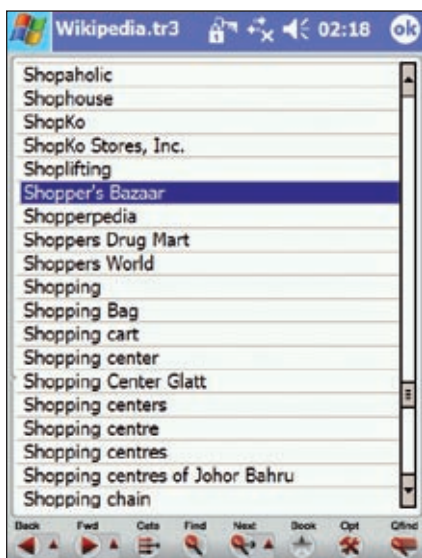
(\$80, around £42, from www.parallels.com) and running ActiveSync from there. Both these solutions work perfectly, and you'll still be able to do most things from within the native Mac environment. If you have any programs on the handheld that use Windows-only desktop companion programs, you'll still be able to hop into Windows and use these whenever you need to. If you plan to do this, Parallels is a much better bet than Boot Camp, as it lets you run multiple operating systems simultaneously, so you can keep a copy of Windows running continuously provided you have enough memory, preferably more than 1GB.



▲ If you want to synchronise your Pocket PC with a Mac, you'll need additional software



▲ You can search huge reference works quickly in TomeRaider



▲ The extensive resources of Wikipedia are now available in a PDA format



▲ With a reader program, most reference works can be adapted to a PDA

reference material, totalling many hundreds of items. Until recently, you had to trawl other websites to find files in TomeRaider format, but now they're neatly catalogued and downloadable directly from the TomeRaider website, which makes things far more straightforward.

WORLD IN YOUR POCKET

The TomeRaider reader software has been around for most major PDA platforms for a long time, but has improved immensely in the past year or so, and the Pocket PC version is the best of them all. As well as allowing you to search huge files in just a few seconds, you can also perform advanced searches using AND/OR criteria to find things based on up to three search

strings at once. You can also bookmark interesting pages for future reference, or use them simply to mark where you've got to in the book you're currently reading. Files such as Wikipedia articles are hyperlinked, like the web-based originals, so a quick tap on underlined text moves you straight to related entries, all at lightning-fast speed.

The 1,100MB Wikipedia file contains most of the text entries and a selected number of small images, but there's a more comprehensive version available for separate purchase. For \$25 (around £13), you can get a DVD containing almost a million articles and a staggering 320,000 images, again in a single TomeRaider data file. You will need a 4GB memory card to

store the file, and the card alone currently costs close to £100, but if you are looking for the ultimate handheld reference work there's nothing to touch it.

If you can't stretch to a 4GB card, there's a DVD version with 240,000 (smaller) images that will squeeze on to a 2GB card, which you can now buy for under £20. However, there's no price difference between the two DVDs. Go to www.infodisiac.com for more details on the Wikipedia DVDs.

Whichever version of the Wikipedia you go for, the huge data files are updated only once or twice per year, so the information will never be quite as up to date as the online version, though the same goes for any printed encyclopedia. **CS**

HANDMARK Warfare Incorporated



\$30 (around £16)

Warfare Incorporated isn't new, but it has been updated to work on Windows Mobile 5 as well as older Pocket PCs. Nearly three years after its initial launch, it's still one of the best games to make it to the Pocket PC platform.

Warfare Incorporated is a science-fiction real-time strategy game that is based on interplanetary mining operations. You are tasked with fighting off rival factions to keep the company on top. What makes this game so good is not just that the play is so engrossing, but also that the gameplay itself works so well on a handheld.

A lot of PDA-based games use text and graphics that are incredibly tiny and hard on the eyes. Warfare Incorporated has been intelligently created to make everything relatively easy to look at, but still visually impressive. It's fascinating to watch the screen as you build mining operations and gather resources, with all your



◀ Warfare Incorporated is intelligently made and looks great

various troops and vehicles moving automatically as soon as you direct them to a particular task.

Stylus control on a PDA works far better than mouse control on a PC when you are selecting and moving objects on the screen, so interacting with the game is intuitive. The only slight disappointment is that you are always fighting similar, all-human armies, each with the same array of infantry, weapons and vehicles, and there are no horrific aliens to spice things up.

There are three difficulty levels to choose from. Most of the missions take an hour or so to complete, so it will take quite a while to get through them all. If you're really dedicated, you can create your own using the free PC-based mission editor. If you enjoy strategy games – and this one is easy to learn, thanks to the built-in tutorials – then it's worth giving Warfare Incorporated a try.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Highly absorbing gameplay
- ✓ Interface works well on handhelds

SUPPLIER www.handmark.com

Pocket Book Build a reference document

Pocket Word (Word Mobile) doesn't have an easy way to bookmark important sections or make notes for your reference. A good alternative is to turn your Microsoft Word files into e-books that can be read using the free Microsoft Reader application that comes with every Pocket PC. This way, you can easily add as many bookmarks and annotations to a document as you like, apply highlights to selected passages of text and add inline drawings, while keeping the original document intact.

You can convert text documents into Microsoft Reader (.lit) format directly from within Word 2002 or 2003 via a free plug-in from www.microsoft.com/reader/developers/downloads/rmr.asp. If you want to use Word files that incorporate graphics, try ReaderWorks Standard (www.overdrive.com/readerworks), also free for personal use. It can also convert HTML and plain-text documents, plus Microsoft Word format.

If you prefer eReader (www.ereader.com) or Mobipocket (www.mobipocket.com) to Microsoft's e-book format, there are similar conversion tools available, but in both cases the required software costs at least \$30 (around £16).